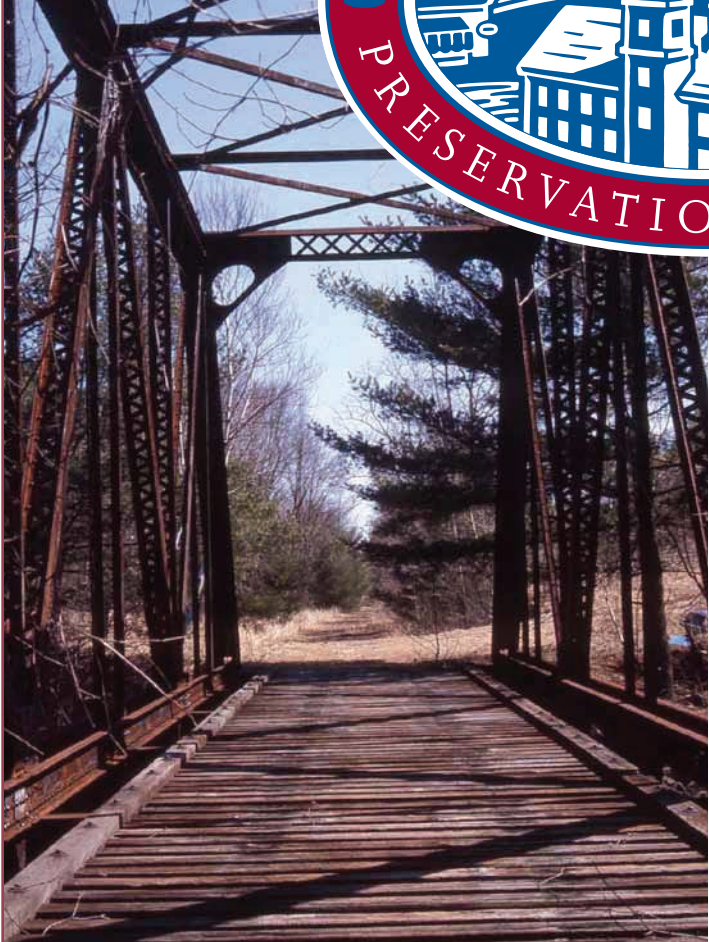
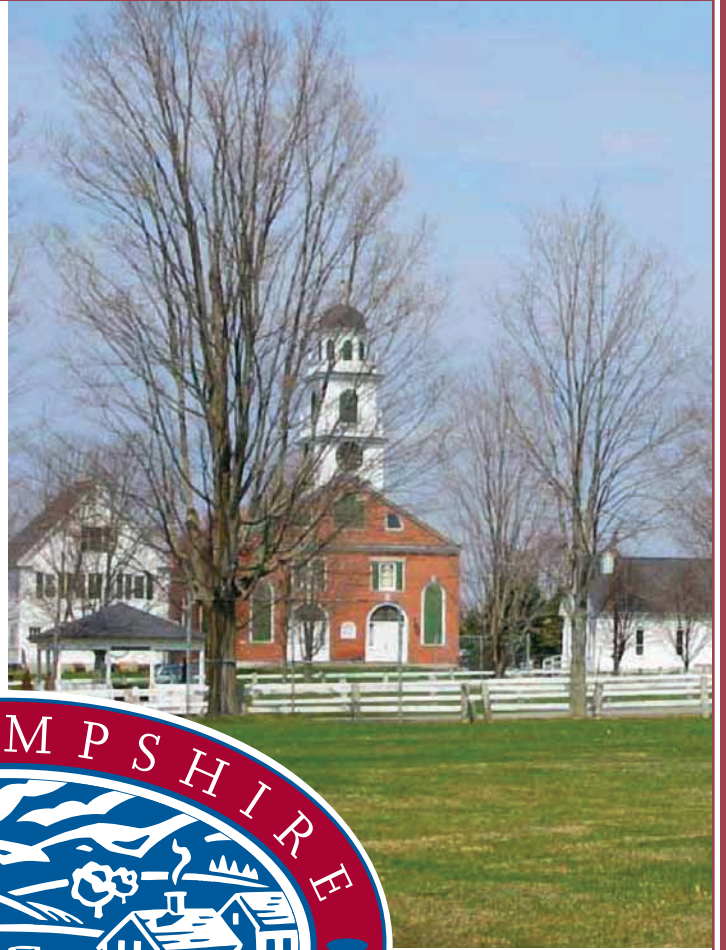


# Preserving Community Character



*A Preservation  
Planning Handbook  
for New Hampshire*

Planning Tools Excerpt

# Preservation Planning Tools

NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES have a wide variety of preservation and planning tools and techniques available to them. While often spearheaded by the local heritage or historic district commission, these strategies can be evaluated and implemented by citizen petition or other arms of local government. These tools offer an array of opportunities to protect and preserve the cultural, historical, or even natural resources of the community. Each has a different purpose and effect on the preservation of a community's character. Some can be implemented independently, while others are designed to be used in tandem. In any event, for these strategies and methods to be effective, they require support and commitment from within the community.

This chapter briefly describes each tool, presents advantages and disadvantages, and directs the reader to sources for additional information.

## HISTORICAL RESOURCE SURVEY

An historical resource survey is an essential tool for heritage and historic district commissions. A survey of a community's historic buildings, structures, sites and objects forms the backbone for shaping the preservation component of a municipal master plan; providing background information and context for threatened resources; identifying and evaluating resources being considered for the National and State registers; and guiding the decision-making process within a local historic district. The survey will reveal the historic character of a community and determine which resources take preservation priority and why.

There are two primary types of surveys that can be conducted: reconnaissance survey and intensive survey. Both include the full range of historical resources, generally defined as fifty years or older. The range will vary from town to town, but will typically include all types of buildings (houses, churches, schools, town halls, granges, mills, barns and agricultural outbuildings, etc.), cemeteries, town pounds, railroad lines and related structures, granite culverts, street clocks, mile markers, bridges, statues and so forth. Built landscape features, such as granite-work, stone walls, or fences, are noted as well.

Sometimes a survey focuses on a specific resource type. In recent years, several communities have surveyed their barns and other agricultural buildings, recording their history and physical features.

The type of survey selected and the size of the survey area are decisions that are made by the



Fitzwilliam, courtesy photo

heritage or historic district commission, in concert with the local governing body. Budgetary considerations, available expertise and planning requirements will shape the decision.

Since the fifty-year threshold for inclusion in a survey is a moving target, the survey will need to be updated every five to ten years, or at a minimum, when the town master plan is updated.

## RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

A reconnaissance survey is used either as a preliminary step in the survey process or in situations where a general or cursory level of information is all that is required. This survey technique is also known as a visual survey or “windshield survey” because it is usually undertaken

*A good survey will include the full range of resources—and from all periods—that define a community.*



*The historical resource survey is the backbone of virtually all preservation planning efforts. No community should be without one.*

from an automobile. Surveyors drive road-by-road or block-by-block throughout the entire community to get a rough estimate of the number and types of historical resources present. For each resource, the surveyor provides its location, building materials, approximate date of construction, major exterior alterations and a photograph.

While reconnaissance surveys do not collect specific information on a building, they can be very useful in the early stages of preservation planning. A town might opt for a reconnaissance survey to focus future intensive survey efforts or to determine how to proceed with completing a preservation plan or historical resources chapter within a community's master plan.

Volunteers can conduct a reconnaissance survey, and the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources can provide training and guidance.

### INTENSIVE SURVEY

An intensive survey is far more in-depth, and thus produces more useful data for local planning purposes. This type of survey is conducted on foot. In addition to the data collected for a reconnaissance survey, surveyors document the physical traits of each resource, noting major changes over the years; research its history; and evaluate its significance and National Register eligibility.

Research will typically include analyzing historic maps and photographs; reviewing local and country histories; deed research; and interviews. All sources are footnoted and compiled in a bibliography. It is useful to attach copies of historic photographs to the forms. Similarly to a reconnaissance survey, the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources has a form to use for intensive surveys. And again, the data should be computerized, and/or filed, plotted on a town map, and accessible at public venues.

An intensive survey is usually undertaken by a consultant, with local volunteer assistance. There are plenty of ways for citizens to become involved, including distributing building history questionnaires to property owners, photography, data entry, and publicizing the results.

### Survey Forms

The Division of Historical Resources provides two types of forms to inventory historical resources: the Individual Inventory Form and the Area Form. The former is used to record an individual resource. At the reconnaissance level, only the

front page is completed, accompanied by a location map and photograph. At the intensive level, the entire form is completed. The Area Form is used to document the architectural and historical patterns that characterize a larger area: a neighborhood, a complex (such as a millyard or a children's summer camp), a potential historical district, or an area affected by a large-scale construction or transportation project.

The Area Form is also used to examine the history and architecture of an entire town, laying out various historic contexts that define the community and describing the range of resources associated with each historic period and context. When used in this manner, the form is referred to as a Town-wide Area Form. The Town-side Area Form also lists all locally designated, State and National Register properties, as well as those eligible for such listing. Together, the documentation provides a heritage or historic district commission, planning board, or interested parties a means to quickly understand the broad patterns of history that are reflected in their community's built environment. It can crystallize decision-making and prioritize future preservation planning activity.

Ideally, completed forms are entered into a computer database and available through a website, but at a minimum, forms should be placed in file folders, and organized alphabetically by street or area name. In addition to the form, files can contain historic views of the resources and background historical information. Each resource and area should be plotted on a map of the community and incorporated into the GIS system, if applicable. Hard copies of the survey should be made available in town offices and at the public library.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

"How to Complete the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources Individual Inventory Form:"

[www.nh.gov/nhdhr/inventorymanual.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/inventorymanual.pdf)

"How to Complete the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources Area Form:"

[www.nh.gov/nhdhr/areamanual.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/areamanual.pdf)

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources barn survey project: [www.nh.gov/nhdhr/barnsurveyproject.html](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/barnsurveyproject.html)

Bzdak, Meredith. "Cultural Resource Surveys, Documenting Your Communities Character." *The Alliance Review*. April/May 1999.

*Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*. National Register Bulletin (24).

Cochran, Chris, ed. and compiler, *Making Defensible Decisions: A Manual for Local Historic Preservation Commissions and Design Review Boards*. Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 2002

## MUNICIPAL MASTER PLAN: HISTORICAL RESOURCES CHAPTER

*RSA 674:2 II(b)*

The master plan is a fundamental planning tool to help a community meet the challenge of making sound decisions related to its development. It is both a reference and policy document. The master plan contains appropriate maps, charts and supporting text, which present the recommendations of the planning board, and offers guidelines for community decision makers. It forms the basis for policies and ordinances that the community develops, adopts and implements to manage and direct municipal growth, development, and change. In New Hampshire, adoption of a master plan is now a prerequisite for implementing zoning and some other land use controls.

The only two chapters required by state statutes in all municipal master plans are the vision and land use chapters. However, the state statutes also recommend the addition of several other chapters depending on the needs of each community. The historical and cultural resources chapter is one of the recommended chapters. If developed it should clearly state the community's desire to preserve and protect the town's historical and cultural resources. It can discuss the positive benefits of preservation, including defining community character, preserving history and a sense of place, revitalizing downtowns, reducing waste, and creating jobs.

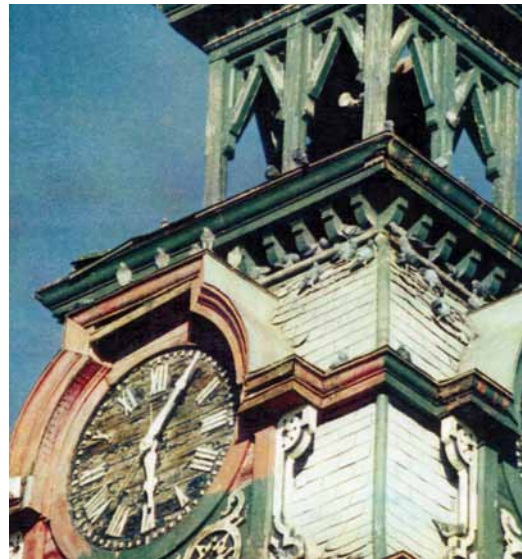
*The historical and cultural resources chapter can discuss the positive benefits of preservation, including defining community character, economic vitality, revitalizing downtowns, and preserving history and a sense of place.*

The historical and cultural resources chapter is usually written by a committee representing a local preservation entity, such as the heritage commission, historic district commission, historical society, or some combination. Interested citizens can also be invited to participate, and it is recommended that the planning board be involved. The regional planning commission and private consultants can provide assistance in drafting the chapter. Once a draft is complete, a public hearing or forum will allow the committee to presents its ideas and solicit feedback.

In drafting the chapter, the following questions may serve as a useful guide:

- Why is historic preservation important to the community?

- What elements of our heritage do we want to preserve?
- What has the community previously done to preserve and protect that heritage?
- What is currently being done to preserve and protect that heritage?
- What can be done in the future to preserve and protect it?
- When should this work occur and by whom?



*Town of Pembroke clock, pre-revitalization, courtesy photo*

The chapter typically includes the following sections:

### OVERVIEW HISTORY

The chapter should begin with a brief history of the community. The overview should highlight the community's development from its earliest settlement through the present, identifying the influences, trends, and patterns that shaped the community. The narrative is most easily written if the community's history is broken into periods and/or themes that affected local history (e.g., early settlement, agriculture, emergence of a village, arrival of railroad, mature industrial growth, early tourism, automobile transportation), as they will have influenced building and development patterns. Historic maps, census data, town and county histories, and city directories are good sources of information.

### HISTORICAL RESOURCES SURVEY

A summary of the findings from the historical resources survey, focusing on typical types and location of resources, clusters or historic areas/districts, as well as rare and unique resources, is included in the chapter. The full survey should be formally adopted as part of the master plan.

*The Towns of Exeter, Pembroke and Merrimack recently inserted historical resource chapters into their Master Plans.*

## HISTORICAL RESOURCES MAP

The historical resource map(s) should locate all of the historic areas that were identified in the survey, as well as all historical resources that fall beyond these areas. If the town has any National Register or locally designated historic districts, they should be mapped, as well.

## SUMMARY OF PAST PRESERVATION ACTIVITY

This component of the chapter summarizes all previous preservation activities undertaken within the community, such as establishing historic districts, publishing a walking tour, creating a heritage commission, an unsuccessful effort to enact a demolition review ordinance, and so forth.

## GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The committee can hold a series of work sessions and public forums to develop goals. Goals might include any of the preservation planning tools

included in this chapter—or be specific to the community in question, such as developing a plan to preserve vacant publicly owned buildings. Each goal needs to be prioritized and accompanied by an implementation strategy outlining who will undertake it, how and when.

### MERRIMACK:

<http://www.ci.merrimack.nh.us/departments/communitydevelopment/2002%20Master%20Plan%20Update/Chapter%20VIII%20-%20Historic%20Resources%20final.pdf>

### EXETER:

<http://www.rpc-nh.org/PDFs/docs/H&CR-Chapter-11-Final-12-2004.pdf>

### PEMBROKE:

[http://www.pembroke-nh.com/pdf/2005\\_master\\_plan/Adopted\\_Historic\\_and\\_Cultural\\_Resources\\_06-04.pdf](http://www.pembroke-nh.com/pdf/2005_master_plan/Adopted_Historic_and_Cultural_Resources_06-04.pdf)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

White, Bradford J. and Richard J. Roddewig, *Preparing a Historic Preservation Plan*. American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report #450, 1994

*As of early 2006, there are 105 districts and 602 individual properties listed on the National Register in New Hampshire.*

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historical resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Resources can be buildings, districts, sites, landscapes, structures or objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. Properties can be listed in the Register either individually or as part of an historic district. If a property is part of a district, it will be designated either a contributing or a non-contributing resource. Each contributing resource has all the same benefits of listing as individually listed properties.

Benefits of listing on the National Register, whether individually or as part of an historic district, are as follows:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community
- Some protection from impacts caused by state or federally funded, licensed or assisted projects
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits if undertaking

an approved rehabilitation project and the property is income-generating

- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available
- Special consideration or relief in application of access, building and safety codes
- Strong marketing tool for owners and businesses
- Leverage for the community when working with developers, in that listing publicly recognizes a significant community asset.
- Promotion of the unique features of buildings helps owners make sound decisions on rehabilitation and maintenance issues
- No restrictions on using or altering the property, as long as only private funds are involved

For a property to be listed on the National Register, it must go through a nomination process. While anyone can prepare a National Register nomination, the depth of research and architectural analysis required leads many people to seek the assistance of a preservation consultant. The first step is to complete an inventory form (see Historical Resource Surveys) to determine whether the property is eligible for the Register. If so determined, a National Register nomination form is then completed and submitted to the New Hampshire Division of

Historical Resources (DHR) for review and approval, after which it is forwarded to the National Park Service for final approval and listing. Before embarking on a nomination, the applicant should contact the DHR, both for assistance in determining whether the property or district might be eligible for the Register and to obtain the specific instructions for completing nominations in New Hampshire.

## STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

New Hampshire's State Register of Historic Places recognizes and encourages the identification and protection of historical, architectural, archeological and cultural resources. Resources may be buildings, districts, sites, landscapes, structures or objects that are meaningful in the history, architecture, archeology, engineering or traditions of New Hampshire residents and their communities.

A resource must meet at least one of the following four criteria for listing:

1. Tell a story about an event(s) that is meaningful to a community's history
2. Have an association with a person(s) who made important contributions to a community, professional or local tradition
3. Represent a local architectural or engineering tradition; exemplify an architectural style or building type; or serve as a long-standing focal point in a neighborhood or community
4. An identified, but unexcavated and unevaluated archeological site that is likely to yield significant information about the lives, traditions and activities of former residents

Generally, an eligible resource must be at least fifty years old. It must also retain enough of its historic character and physical attributes to illustrate what it is being nominated for.

Properties that are listed on the State Register:

- Are publicly recognized for their significance to a community
- Are considered in the planning phase of local or state-funded or assisted projects
- Qualify for state financial assistance for preservation projects, when such funds are available
- Receive special consideration or relief in application of access, building and safety codes

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources' web page will link you to the National Park Service and its instructions and bulletins on completing nominations:  
<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/natreg.html>

Sources and techniques for collecting the necessary data to nominate a property to the National Register of Historic Places:  
[www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb39/nrb39\\_1.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb39/nrb39_1.htm)



Centennial School, photo courtesy: Milford School Board

Owners of properties:

- Receive a complimentary one-year membership to the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance
- Are not restricted from using or altering the property, as long as only private funds are involved

The State Register is administered by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (DHR), which provides forms and instructions for listing both individual properties and districts. A property owner can prepare the form, or arrange to have it completed by a professional in the preservation field. Before proceeding, contact the DHR for general assistance and to ensure an inventory form for the property is not already on file. After DHR staff have reviewed the completed form and evaluated whether it meets the State Register criteria, it will recommend it for listing at the State Historical Resources Council's quarterly meeting. Once approved, the DHR sends a letter and certificate to the property owner, informing him that the property has been listed.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources:  
<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/barnstatereg.html>

The form can be downloaded from their web site:  
<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/formsmanual.html>